

R 181351Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0320
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
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CJTTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
COMUSNAVCENT
DIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000185

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA, DS/IP/SPC/SO, AND AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS
USAID FOR GEORGIANNA PLATT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/18/2029

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: UN SECURITY OFFICER CONCERNS OVER CRIME AND WATER
IN ASMARA

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for Reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C) The UN security officer told RSO he is concerned about the rise in crime in Asmara. Recently, he has instructed all UN personnel to avoid walking in Asmara, even during daylight hours. He is also upgrading residential security at all houses to include grills and 24/7 residential guard coverage.

He said \$7,000 was stolen from a safe at the UNHCR building after hours in the beginning of June. The burglary appeared to be an inside job as the safe and the doors to the office showed no signs of forced entry. Also this month, a UNICEF program officer's laptop and memory stick were stolen from her office after hours. The security officer stated he felt this burglary was carried out by local staff at the behest of the GSE. Both items had data for UN reports on street children, human rights abuses, and water/food shortages in Eritrea. He said the theft of memory sticks and laptops is increasing at UN facilities. His local employees (who are well paid by Eritrean standards) are feeling the effects of the rise in food prices and are starting to steal more from UN facilities to survive.

12. (C) The GSE is evicting UNICEF from its government-owned building without explanation. The security officer recently approved UNICEF relocating to an apartment building across the street from the RSO residence. The GSE still refuses to give UN agencies diesel fuel, a situation that has persisted for more than 14 months. The UN currently has only 3,000 liters of diesel, which is rationed to extend its use. During some of the recent long power outages, the UN has had to shut down building operations to conserve fuel. UN residences are purchasing water from water trucks for residential use. Most of their residences have only small water tanks and he is concerned about the future availability of water if the drought in Eritrea continues.

13. (SBU) Comment: Post continues to see an increase in crime as economic conditions in Asmara continue to deteriorate, water/food/fuel shortages persist, and unemployment increases. Post is still able to purchase water for embassy use, but that is becoming increasingly more difficult.

MCMULLEN